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By Maj.-Gen. Adelbert Ames

Addresses to New York Commandery,
Loyal Legion. 3rd Series. N.Y. 1907

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Personal Recollections of the Rebellion

THE CAPTURE OF FORT FISHER, NORTH CAROLINA, JANUARY 15, 1865.

READ BY BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL ADELBERT AMES, LATE
U. S. ARMY, FEBRUARY 3, 1897.

ABOUT the first of December, 1864, when in command of the 2d Division, Twenty-fourth Corps, of the Army of the James, then before Richmond, Va., I was notified I had been selected to lead my division in a movement by sea, against some point of the Confederacy on the Atlantic coast.

At that time Wilmington, N. C., was the port through which the Confederacy received a large part of its munitions of war, and whence was shipped to England, in payment therefor, much of its cotton and tobacco. Wilmington was situated on the east bank of the Cape Fear River, thirty miles from its mouth, which was guarded by Fort Fisher.

Our Navy was untiring in its efforts to blockade that port, but was not successful.

The order from General Butler to General Weitzel relative to the expedition December 6th, 1864, was:

"The Major-General commanding has entrusted you with the command of the expedition about to embark for the North Carolina coast. It will consist of 6500 infantry, two batteries,

and fifty cavalry. The effective men of General Ames's division of the Twenty-fourth Corps will furnish the infantry force. General Paine is under your orders, and General Ames will be ordered to report to you in person immediately."

My division, of three brigades, was composed of New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, and Indiana troops, about 3300 in number. General Paine had a division of colored troops.

We embarked at Bermuda Hundreds, Va., December 8th, and our transports reached the place of rendezvous off New Inlet, N. C., Thursday the 15th. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, we awaited the coming of the Navy.

Admiral Porter, commanding our fleet, arrived Sunday evening the 18th. The next day the water was too rough to make a landing on the ocean beach. Towards evening, a northeast gale coming up, the transports were sent to Beaufort for coal and water, as the ten days' supply had run short, where they were delayed by the weather and the difficulty of getting coal, until Saturday the 24th.

I did not go to Beaufort, as my ship, on which I had one of my brigades, was well prepared for such an emergency.

General Butler, followed by his fleet of transports, returned to New Inlet on Saturday the 24th of December, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon.

The powder boat, which played such a notorious part in this expedition, had been exploded at about two o'clock on the morning of the same day.

The idea of the powder boat was General Butler's, but it was approved of and adopted by the Navy, which furnished the vessel and its share of the 215 tons of gunpowder used. The Navy held control of this experiment from first to last.

The explosion was untimely, and a failure. Commodore Jeffers of the Navy reports: "A part of the programme required that the vessel should be grounded, which appears not to have been the case."

Commander Rhind writes: "That, owing to the want of confinement and insufficient fusing of the mass, much

of the powder was blown away before ignition and its effect lost."

Admiral Porter reports: "That the powder was finally exploded from the effects of a fire kindled in the forecastle. No results of value were to be expected from this mode. It was proposed only as a final resort, in order to prevent the vessel, in any contingency, from falling into the hands of the enemy."

Commander James Parker, U. S. Navy, stated to the New York Loyal Legion, October 5, 1892: "We all believed in it [the powder boat] from the Admiral down, but when it proved so laughable a failure we, of the Navy, laid its paternity upon General Butler."

Colonel Lamb, in command, describes Fort Fisher as follows:

"At the land-face of Fort Fisher the peninsula was about half a mile wide, Cape Fear River being on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. This face commenced about a hundred feet from the river with a half bastion, and extended with a heavy curtain to a full bastion on the ocean side, where it joined the sea-face. The work was built to withstand the heaviest artillery fire. The outer slope was twenty feet high from the berm to the top of the parapet, at an angle of forty-five degrees, and was sodded with marsh grass, which grew luxuriantly. The parapet was not less than twenty-five feet thick, with an inclination of only one foot. The revetment was five feet nine inches high, from the floor of the gun chambers, and these were some twelve feet or more from the interior plane. The guns were all mounted in barbette, Columbiad carriages; there was not a single casemated gun in the fort. Between the gun chambers, containing one or two guns each (there were twenty heavy guns on the land-face), there were (some eighteen) heavy traverses, exceeding in size any known to engineers, to protect from an enfilading fire. They extended out some twelve feet on the parapet, running back thirty feet or more. The gun chambers were reached from the rear by steps. In each traverse was an alternate magazine or bomb-proof, the latter ventilated by an air-chamber. Passageways penetrated the traverses in the interior of the work, forming additional bomb-proofs for the reliefs of the guns.

"The sea-face was a mile long, and for a hundred yards from the northeast bastion was of the same massive character as the land-face.

"As a defence against infantry there was a system of subterre torpedoes extending across the peninsula, five to six hundred feet from the land-face and so disconnected that an explosion of one would not affect the others; inside the torpedoes, about fifty feet from the berm of the work, extending from the river bank to the seashore, was a heavy palisade of sharpened logs nine feet high, pierced for musketry, and so laid out as to have an enfilading fire on the centre, where there was a redoubt guarding a sally-port from which two Napoleons were run out as occasion required. At the river end of the palisade was a deep and muddy slough, across which was a bridge, the entrance on the river road into the fort; commanding this bridge was a Napoleon gun. There were three mortars in rear of the land-face."

This strong work had, at the time of our first expedition, a garrison of 1400 men, 900 of whom were veterans.

Colonel Lamb had been incited to the utmost by General Lee, who had sent him word that he "must hold the fort or he could not subsist his army."

On the morning of the 24th the fleet of Admiral Porter moved in towards New Inlet and opened fire on the fort. The character of this bombardment and the demands made by the Admiral on his ships and sailors I will let him tell.

In his letter to the Secretary of the Navy of the 24th of December, 1864, he says:

← "I have the honor to inform you that I attacked the forts at the mouth of the Cape Fear River to-day at 12.30. . . . After getting the ships in position we silenced it in about an hour and a half, there being no troops here to take possession. I am merely firing now to keep up practice. The forts are nearly demolished, and as soon as troops come we can take possession. We have set them on fire, blown some of them up, and all that is wanted now is troops to land and go into them."

The Admiral failed to mention, in his letter, the fact that I had offered 1000 men and co-operation, although, in his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of

the War, he said: "General Ames had a thousand men there, and he sent on board and told me he was ready to land."

In his letter of the 26th he says, referring to the bombardment of the 24th:

"In an hour and fifteen minutes after the first shot was fired not a shot came from the fort. Finding that the batteries were silenced completely I directed the ships to keep up a moderate fire in hopes of attracting the attention of the transports and bringing them in."

In this same letter of December 26th Admiral Porter says, speaking of the bombardment of the forts on December 25th:

"The firing this day was slow, only sufficient to amuse the enemy while the army landed. In the bombardment of the 25th the men were engaged firing slowly for seven hours. . . . Everything was coolly done throughout the day, and I witnessed some beautiful practice."

In a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, December 29th, after the fleet had left and the transports had gone back to Hampton Roads, he writes:

"At no time did I permit the vessels to open on them with all their batteries, limiting some of them to about two shots a minute, and permitting the large vessels to fight only one division of guns at a time; and the bombardment cost only a certain amount of shells, which I would expend in a month's target practice anyhow."

Such are the salient features of the reports of Admiral Porter.

General Whiting, who was in the fort, and who commanded that military district, says the slight damage done by this cannonading was repaired at night, and that "the garrison was in no instance driven from its guns, the palisade was in perfect order, and the mines the same, the wires not having been cut."

General Weitzel testified before the Committee on the

Conduct of the War: "I made a reconnoissance of the fort and saw that the work, as a defensive work, was not injured at all, except that one gun about midway of the land-face was dismounted. I did not see a single opening in the row of palisades that was in front of the ditch; it seemed to be perfectly intact." All in the fort agree that Admiral Porter was mistaken as to the effects of the cannonading.

So much as to the condition of the fort.

On the morning of the 25th all our transports anchored near the shore some two or three miles north of the fort, and the troops immediately began to land.

I had been selected to storm the fort with my division.

My report on December 28th is as follows:

"Brevet Brig. Gen. Curtis and 500 of his brigade were the first to land, and were taken towards the fort by Gen Weitzel for a reconnoissance. . . . It was dusk when I reached the front. I then heard that the First Brigade was to remain where it was until further orders, and that if any attack was made the responsibility would rest with the officer in immediate command. At this time I did not know that it had been decided not to attack the fort. Upon the report of Curtis that he could take the fort I sent his brigade forward to make the attempt."

In his report Curtis says:

"On my arrival at this point I received orders from Gen. Ames to return and re-establish my lines as they were, and, if possible, to occupy the fort, and I at once ordered my skirmishers forward, etc. . . . The enemy, having cover of the darkness, opened on the skirmishers as they advanced with musketry and canister, but did not prevent their establishing the line in its former position, with the reserves in close proximity."

Curtis made no further effort to take the fort, as I had ordered him to do, but sent word to me that he was "occupying his former position." Why he failed to assault the fort after I assumed the responsibility and gave the order I have never known. At this time an order reached me to return to our ships, which we did, and the first expedition ended.

An incident occurred which had much to do in giving an erroneous idea of the condition of the fort and garrison.

One of our lieutenants approached the fort and captured its flag, which had been shot away by the Navy, and which had fallen with the flagstaff on the outer slope of the parapet to the ditch.

On this point General Weitzel testifies:

"I sent for Lieut. Walling and questioned him about it, and he told me that a shell had knocked the flagstaff outside and on top of the parapet, and the flag hung over into or outside of the ditch. Thinking that probably the rebels had not observed it, he crept up on his hands and knees to the palisading, found a hole in it that one of the shells had made, crept through the hole and up to the flag, and got it and got away with it without being observed."

Let us see why our expedition terminated thus abruptly.

Weitzel had been ordered by Butler to land and make a reconnoissance. In his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War he gave his experience during the war in charging and defending field works, and continuing, said:

"After that experience, with the information I had obtained from reading and study—for before this war I was an instructor at the Military Academy for three years under Professor Mahan, on those very subjects—remembering well the remarks of the Lieutenant-General commanding, that it was his intention I should command that expedition, because another officer selected by the War Department had once shown timidity, and in face of the fact that I had been appointed a Major-General only twenty days before, and needed confirmation; notwithstanding all this, I went back to Gen. Butler, and told him I considered it would be murder to order an attack on that work with that force."

Colonel Lamb says, in reference to the loss of his flag:

"I had no fear of an assault, and because, during a bombardment which rendered an assault impossible, I covered my men, and a few straggling skirmishers, too few to attract attention, got near the fort, and some gallant officers thought they could

have carried the work, it does not follow that they would not have paid dearly for their temerity if they had made the attempt."

General Whiting speaks to the same effect.

Now, who is to say that Weitzel, Whiting, and Lamb were mistaken as to the situation that day? Is it the brave soldier, who crept unseen through a hole in the palisade to the parapet and took a flag from a staff which had been shot away?

" Is it Admiral Porter, who wrote to the Secretary of the Navy January 17, 1865:

← "I have since visited Fort Fisher and the adjoining works, and find their strength greatly beyond what I had conceived. An engineer might be excusable in saying they could not be captured except by regular siege. I wonder, even now, how it was done. The work, as I said before, is really stronger than the Malakoff tower, which defied so long the combined power of France and England."

In a letter of the 16th of January to the Secretary of the Navy, he says: "I was in Fort Malakoff a few days after it surrendered to the French and English; the combined armies of the two nations were many months capturing that stronghold, and it won't compare, either in size or strength, to Fort Fisher."

I have no hesitancy in saying that they were not mistaken, though it is true that without personal knowledge of the character of the fort, and, for the time, believing Curtis, I ordered him to take it on his assertion that he could do so.

What was not possible December 25th, was made possible January 15th, through an efficient bombardment on the part of the Navy and the co-operation of 2000 sailors and marines and an additional force of 1400 infantry.

" January 1, 1865, Grant wrote to Secretary Stanton: "The fact is, there are but two ways of taking Fort Fisher, operating from the water: one to surprise them whilst there is but a small garrison defending the place; the other is for the Navy to send a portion of their fleet into Cape Fear

River. . . .” He continues: “In the three days of good weather which elapsed after the Army had reached the scene of action, before the Navy appeared, our troops had the chance of capturing Fort Fisher whilst it had an insufficient garrison to hold it. The delay gave the enemy time to accumulate a force. . . . The failure before was the result of delays by the Navy.”

So, of Grant's two ways of taking the fort, one, by surprise, failed, as he said, because of the delay of the Navy, and as to the other, Colonel Comstock reports to Grant, January 9th: “There is no hope, at least at present, of the Admiral's trying to run by Fort Fisher.”

Grant ordered and intended that Weitzel should have command of the expedition. North Carolina was in Butler's military department. His order retained Weitzel as his subordinate.

Though Grant may have intended and ordered certain action on the part of our expedition in December, 1864, on the first of January, 1865, he wrote the Secretary of War, as just quoted, that there were but two ways to take the fort—by surprise or by the occupancy of the river by the Navy. There was no surprise, the Navy was not in the river, the bombardment of the fort was ineffectual, Weitzel decided against an assault, Butler acquiesced and ordered the expedition back to Virginia, saying to Weitzel at the same time that he, Butler, would assume all responsibility, as he could stand the blame better than could Weitzel, the professional soldier.

The Committee on the Conduct of the War was composed of the leading men in Congress at that time. Much experience in the investigation of military affairs had made them, to say the least, fairly capable judges. They could command any witness, they were critical and severe in their examinations, and their conclusions were reached without fear or favor. Honest Ben Wade was their Chairman. This is their decision:

“In conclusion, your Committee would say, from all the testimony before them, that the determination of

General Butler not to assault the fort seems to have been fully justified by all facts and circumstances then known or afterwards ascertained."

Few can comprehend the penalty General Butler had to pay for his action on this occasion. The war was within a few months of its end, and he had hoped for a share of the honors conferred on those who served faithfully and well, but he was sent home, and the whole nation condemned him for the failure. General Weitzel, one of the best of men, and one of our ablest generals, was humbled in spirit before the storm of censure and ridicule. But all that came after the capture of the fort on our second expedition.

The second expedition was started without delay. January 2, 1865, Gen. A. H. Terry was put in command. On the 3d we left camp, began re-embarkation on the 4th, and completed it on the 5th.

I had 3300 picked men in my division. General Paine had the same number in his. There were added a brigade of 1400 men under Col. J. G. Abbott and two batteries of light artillery of three and six guns each. Colonel Comstock, who represented Grant on our first expedition, returned with us on the second.

The transports put to sea on the morning of the 6th. A severe storm drove them into Beaufort.

The troops were landed on the 13th, some two miles north of the fort.

Upon landing, the first work on hand was to establish a line of breastworks from the ocean beach to the river to keep the enemy in the direction of Wilmington from interfering with our operations.

A reconnoissance was made. Terry reports:

"As a result of this reconnoissance, and in view of the extreme difficulty which might be expected in landing supplies and the materials for a siege on the often tempestuous beach, it was decided to attempt an assault the next day, provided that, in the mean time, the fire of the Navy should so far destroy the palisades as to make one practicable. This decision was communicated to Admiral Porter, who at once placed a division of

his vessels in a position to accomplish this last-named object, It was arranged, in consultation with him, that a heavy bombardment from all the vessels should commence early in the morning and continue up to the moment of the assault, and that even then it should not cease, but should be diverted from the points of attack to the other parts of the work. It was decided that the assault should be made at 3 P.M., that the army should attack on the western half of the land-face, and that a column of sailors and marines should assault the northeast bastion. The fire of the Navy continued during the night. At 8 A.M. of the 13th all of the vessels, except a division left to aid in the defence of our northern line, moved into position, and a fire, magnificent alike for its power and accuracy, was opened,"

and continued all day Saturday, Saturday night, and Sunday, till 3.30 P. M. "Ames's division had been selected for the assault. . . . At 3.25 P. M. all the preparations were completed, the order to move forward was given to Ames, and a concerted signal was made to Admiral Porter to change the direction of his fire."

The situation at this time was as follows: Some two miles north of the fort General Paine had established a line of breastworks, from ocean to river, facing north, with his own division on the left and Colonel Abbott's brigade on the right. On the sea beach, about half a mile from the fort, were 2000 sailors and marines under command of Fleet Capt. K. R. Breese. On the east were sixty-four ships of war, under Admiral Porter, cannonading the fort. My three brigades were in line, one behind the other, ranging from three to five hundred yards from the fort; the left of each line nearly opposite the middle of the land-face of the fort, the right near the river. A body of sharpshooters were pushed forward, and the whole division was covered from the fire of the enemy, as far as possible, by the inequalities of the ground and slight pits formed by throwing up the sand.

Terry, Comstock, and I were in a small advanced outwork about half a mile from the fort. My able and gallant Adjutant-General, Gen. Chas. A. Carleton, has made the following record: "General Terry turned to General Ames

and said: 'General Ames, the signal agreed upon for the assault has been given.' General Ames asked: 'Have you any special orders to give?' General Terry replied: 'No, you understand the situation and what is desired to be accomplished. I leave everything to your discretion.'" Thus was given me the unrestricted command of the fighting forces.

At once I directed Captain Lawrence of my staff to order Curtis, commanding the First Brigade, to charge, striking the parapet at the end nearest the river. The palisade had been sufficiently broken and shot away by the fire of the Navy to permit the passage of the troops. As I approached the fort I watched with anxious eyes the charge of the First Brigade.

Captain Lawrence heroically led the charge of that part of the brigade which advanced at this time. He was the first through the palisade, and while reaching for a guidon to plant on the first traverse, his hand was shot away and he was dangerously wounded in the neck, but with this lodgment on the first traverse, the force of the charge was spent. I quickly ordered Colonel Pennypacker's brigade, which was close at hand, to charge and sweep down the parapet to the ocean.

I will not attempt a description of the battle. It was a charge of my brigades, one after the other, followed by desperate fighting at close quarters over the parapet and traverses and in and through the covered ways. All the time we were exposed to the musketry and artillery of the enemy, while our own Navy was thundering away, occasionally making us the victims of its fire.

The official reports of my officers give no adequate idea of their gallant deeds, but they must supply the form and coloring of the warlike scenes of that eventful Sunday.

Colonel Daggett, in command of the First Brigade, January 17th, reports:

"At about 3 P.M., General Curtis having received orders to that effect from Gen. Ames, through Capt. Lawrence, the brigade advanced to the charge, so as to strike the sally-port, that having

been deemed the only vulnerable point of the work, and, after a desperate struggle, the advance of the brigade reached the parapet of the fort and scaled it to the first traverse, where the guidon of the 117th New York was planted—the first colors on the fort.”

Major O. P. Harding, who came out of the fight in command of the Second Brigade, reports:

“The brigade was ordered to assault the fort, which was done in a gallant manner and under a heavy fire of grape and musketry, and entered the fort through a sally-port near the river. The 203d Pennsylvania, commanded by Col. J. W. Moore, was the first to enter the fort, closely followed by the 97th Pennsylvania, commanded by First Lieutenant John Wainwright. The colors of each of those regiments reached the parapet about the same time, those of the 97th borne by Col. Pennypacker, and of the 203d by Col. Moore. Col. Pennypacker was seriously wounded while planting his colors on the third traverse, and Col. Moore fell dead while passing the second traverse, waving his colors and commanding his men to follow. After entering the fort the brigade became somewhat broken up; nevertheless, both officers and men behaved gallantly until its capture.

“After the fall of Lieut. Col. Lyman, 203d Pennsylvania, who fell on the sixth traverse, I commanded the regiment until about 5 P.M., when ordered by General Ames to take command of the brigade, which I immediately organized.”

Capt. H. B. Essington, commanding 203d Pennsylvania, reports:

“The regiment charged on the right of the Second Brigade, and was the first regiment of the brigade to enter the fort, going in with the First (Curtis's) Brigade. After having assisted in capturing the first two mounds, a portion of the regiment went to the right and stationed themselves behind a bank in the open field south of the fort. The latter portion then charged across the plain, by order of the commanding general (Gen. Ames), until opposite the seventh or eighth traverse, where they threw up an embankment with their tin plates and shovels, which they held until the fort surrendered, keeping up a steady fire on the enemy.”

Let me say, in passing, that Colonel Pennypacker's conduct in leading his brigade with the colors of his own regiment placed him second to none for gallantry that day. It would be difficult to overestimate the value of his example to his brigade.

Entering the fort and passing to the rear of the parapet at the west end, I made an examination of it from that position, and decided to use my third brigade, Colonel Bell's, with its left by the parapet, right extended south and west inside the fort, and charge into the angle formed by the land- and sea-faces. I ordered Bell forward with his brigade to report to me. Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson, commanding the Third Brigade, January 19th, reports: "Colonel Bell was ordered by General Ames to remain near him for the purpose of receiving orders." Unfortunately Colonel Bell was killed in the advance, gallantly leading his brigade. The part of his brigade which reached me was in a somewhat disorganized condition. I formed it as best I could for the charge. Owing to the obstructions of the demolished quarters of the garrison and the fire of the enemy from the front (the angle had been partially filled in and was protected by a curtain) and from the right, as well as the fire of our Navy, the advance was checked. The men were in a very exposed position, and as no advantage could be gained there I ordered them to join the other troops in pushing seaward on the land-face of the fort. Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson further reports: "The brigade entered the fort conjointly with a portion of the First (Curtis's) Brigade, at the left bastion, a portion moving along the terre-plain and a portion on the ramparts, parapets, and slopes, some of the officers and men in the advance with officers and men of other brigades, all vying with each other."

Owing to the contracted space in which the fighting was done, brigade and regimental formations were impossible. What was accomplished was through the heroic efforts of small bodies of officers and men.

From time to time I sent to Terry, who was in the earth-

work half a mile away, reports of the progress I was making.

I had previously learned that the sailors and marines who had made an attack on the sea angle had been quickly repulsed.

As the sun sank to the horizon, the ardor of the assault abated. Our advance was but slow. Ten of my officers had been killed, forty-seven wounded, and about 500 men were killed and wounded. Among the killed was one brigade commander, the other two were wounded and disabled. I now requested Terry to join me in the fort. It was dark before he and Comstock arrived. I explained the situation.

Colonel Abbott's brigade, which had been relieved from its position in the line facing Wilmington, by the defeated sailors and marines, had been ordered to report to me.

I decided to make my chief effort with the re-enforcements by moving the troops by the flank between the palisade and the foot of the fort until the head of the column should reach the northeast angle by the ocean, then face to the right and rush the men up and over the parapet; and at the same time continue the struggle for the traverses. Col. J. C. Abbott, commanding Second Brigade, 1st Division, in his report of January 15th, says:

"Reaching the fort about dark I reported to Gen. Ames. By order of Gen. Ames I first threw the 3d New Hampshire Volunteers, Capt. Trickey commanding, along the portion of the north face of the work already occupied by his troops and relieved them; also by Gen. Ames's order, I threw out the 7th Connecticut Volunteers, Capt. Marble commanding, as a picket in rear of the work, the right of the line resting on Cape Fear River. During this time the enemy occupied all the eastern and about one-third the northern face of the work. At about 9 o'clock, by order of Gen. Ames, I then proceeded to dislodge the enemy from the remainder of the fort. I then advanced the 7th New Hampshire, Lieut. Col. Rollins commanding. They at once and gallantly charged up the slope enveloping the sea angle of the work, meeting a sharp fire from the enemy, who were stationed behind the parapets, and in rear of the main work."

Captain William H. Trickey, commanding 3d New Hampshire Regiment, reports January 18th:

"I was directed by Col. Abbott, commanding Brigade, to move my regiment to the extreme advance held by the second division and open fire upon the enemy; was thus engaged for nearly an hour, having, to a great extent, silenced the enemy's fire, was then directed by Col. Abbott to take and hold, with twenty men, the next traverse in front, the remainder of my command being left in several traverses to keep up the fire upon the enemy. We took the traverse, as directed, driving the enemy out. Thinking we could go farther, we charged and took the next two, with a like result. After taking the third traverse, having met with considerable resistance, I did not deem it prudent to go farther with so few men, and opened a vigorous fire upon the enemy, who was rallying for the recapture of the traverses; we held the enemy in check until the arrival of the 7th New Hampshire and 6th Connecticut, who charged and took the remainder of the work."

Lieutenant Colonel Rollins reports:

"At 10 P.M. moved my regiment inside the fort, and was ordered by Gen. Ames to take two traverses, and three, if possible, the number not then taken. I moved over the third traverse of the fort, and advanced rapidly inside the stockade until I reached the battery on the northeast angle of the fort, where I formed the right wing of the regiment, leaving the left in support. I then ordered a charge and captured the three remaining traverses and batteries, then pushed on by the right flank, and by so doing cut off the angle of the fort, moved to the right, and, by a rapid and determined advance, captured the remaining traverses and batteries of the fort proper."

Thus, after some seven hours' fighting, more than five of which were after dark, the land-face of the fort was occupied and all resistance ceased. The enemy fled to the shelter of Battery Buchanan, at the end of the point, two miles away. Terry took Abbott and a part of his brigade and marched to Battery Buchanan. Abbott reports: "I was met by the Adjutant-General of the General commanding the enemy's forces, who tendered the

surrender of the battery, upon which I referred to General Terry, who would soon arrive. . . . General Terry having arrived, received the surrender of the work and the force."

Colonel Abbott was mistaken. Terry was too late. Captain Lockwood of my staff had already received the surrender.

It was after ten o'clock. The task set for us at half-past three was finished. Our work was done.

The statement of their achievement is the highest eulogy that can be passed upon our soldiers.

A grievous accident occurred early the next morning, which killed and wounded one hundred and thirty of our gallant heroes. It was the explosion of the magazine of the fort. A board of enquiry was organized and found

"that the following are the main facts, viz.: 1, immediately after the capture of the fort, Gen. Ames gave orders to Lieut. Col. Samuel M. Zent to place guards on all the magazines and bomb-proofs. 2, Lieut. Col. Zent commenced on the northwest corner of the fort, next the river, following the traverses round, and placed guards on thirty-one entrances under the traverses. The main magazine, which afterwards exploded, being in the rear of the traverses, escaped his notice, and, consequently, had no guards from his regiment or any other."

General Bragg reports that the defenders of the fort numbered, all told, about 110 commissioned officers and 2500 men—their casualties being over 400. A few escaped across the river, in boats, under cover of the darkness; the rest became our prisoners.

Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War, had been visiting Sherman at Savannah after his march through Georgia, and on his way north called at Fort Fisher, where he had an interview with Terry.

Upon Stanton's arrival at Fortress Monroe, Va., he sent a dispatch to President Lincoln marked "official," dated Tuesday, 10 A. M., January 17, 1865. In this dispatch Stanton mentions Terry, my brigade commanders, and some

regimental commanders, but omits my name altogether. Among other things he says: "The assault on the other and most difficult side of the fort was made by a column of 3000 troops of the old Tenth Corps, led by Colonel Curtis, under the immediate supervision of General Terry."

This is not true, as the official reports show, in any other sense than that Curtis's brigade first reached the fort under my immediate orders, with Terry half a mile away. An earlier attempt to make public these facts has been impracticable, as the volume of the War Records covering this event was not published till 1894.

With this as a preface I will add to the extracts of the reports of some of my subordinate officers already given, the report of General Terry, who was my only superior officer. He says: "Of General Ames I have already spoken in a letter recommending his promotion. He commanded all the troops engaged and was constantly under fire. His great coolness, good judgment, and skill were never more conspicuous than in this assault."

These official reports show, as Terry says, that I "commanded all the troops engaged" from the first act, when my aide, Capt. A. G. Lawrence, led the first brigade into the fort, to the last act, when the garrison surrendered to my aide, Capt. H. C. Lockwood.

The sailors and marines who assaulted in column the northeast angle of the fort along the sea beach were a body of 2000 men, made up of detachments from different ships. Naturally enough, Captain Breese found it, as has been stated, an unwieldy mass. The 1600 sailors were armed only with pistols and cutlasses. They were quickly repulsed. Few reached the parapet. Once checked, they turned and fled, losing 300 in killed and wounded. Admiral Porter testified: "I suppose the whole thing was over in fifteen minutes, as far as the sailors were concerned, for they were cut down like sheep."

Later, this force was sent to the line of entrenchments facing Wilmington, relieving Colonel Abbott's brigade, which reported to me. Of course Admiral Porter expected

his sailors to carry the fort, but, alas! he had been deceived as to its defensive capabilities, which deception resulted in the apparently needless sacrifice of his gallant sailors.

Our Navy, in its ships and armament, was the most powerful that ever existed up to that time. In officers and men it never had its equal, and never will till an equally enlightened, powerful, and liberty-loving people again rise, in their might, in a struggle for self-preservation.

As to the effect on the fort of the second bombardment, Colonel Lamb writes:

“The land armament, with palisades and torpedoes, had been destroyed. For the first time in the history of sieges the land defences of the works were destroyed, not by the act of the besieging army, but by the concentrated fire, direct and enfilading, of an immense fleet, poured upon them without intermission, until torpedo wires were cut, palisades breached so that they actually afforded cover for assailants, and the slopes of the work were rendered practicable for assault.”

Why the first expedition was a failure and the second a success has never been rightly understood. The military situations have been obscured by the contention between General Butler and Admiral Porter, though the most amicable relations existed between the Army and Navy.

It has been believed that the fort was in the same condition on both occasions, and that it was but poorly garrisoned on the first. Those who so held were in error in both particulars.

According to Badeau, Grant's historian: “Curtis declared that the fort could have been carried on the first expedition, and that at the moment when they were recalled they virtually had possession.” This declaration has been accepted as the truth.

We can examine the facts, now that the official reports have been published, and form our own opinions on this point, which has been the pivot of the whole controversy.

It appears from Curtis's report that he had “pushed the right of his skirmishers to within 75 paces of the fort and had sent back to his reserves for 200 men with which to

possess the fort, but his messenger was there informed that orders from the department commander bade him retire," which he did.

Let us see what these 200 men would have had to do to make what Curtis calls a "virtual," an actual possession of the fort.

Colonel Lamb had a force of 1400 men, 900 of whom were veterans. Whiting, Lamb, and other officers commend the discipline, skill, and gallantry of the garrison. I will not take time to quote from their reports. They all show that the officers of the fort were keenly alive to our movements. Colonel Lamb states that he intentionally kept his men hidden from view. He was perfectly familiar with the surroundings, both within and without the fort.

Now, the one question to decide is, could those 200 men, sent for by Curtis, have taken possession of that palisaded Malakoff fortress, with its garrison of 1400 men?

Lieutenant Colonel Barney, who commanded our forces behind the picket line, nowhere intimates that we had any kind of possession of the fort.

Even Curtis reports, officially, that his skirmishers were met with musketry and canister, and that he retired under a heavy fire.

In making a decision, Lamb's report must not be overlooked. He reports:

"That it was dark at 5.30, when the fleet ceased firing. No assault could be made while the fleet was firing. When the firing ceased, the parapets (which were 20 feet high) were at once manned and half of the garrison (700 men) were stationed outside the work behind the palisade, which was 9 feet high and pierced for musketry."

What soldier will say we had "virtual" possession of the fort under such circumstances?

The second expedition took this question from the realm of speculation.

Three weeks after the first attempt we were back again before the fort, which, because of the efficient bombardment

of the Navy, was far less capable of resistance. A column of 2000 sailors and marines were to make a gallant assault on the sea angle simultaneously with ours, thereby to create a diversion greatly to our advantage.

Curtis had in his brigade, now forming the first line, more than twice as many men as he had before the fort on the first expedition. Again I gave him the order to take the fort. Did he take it? No. His brigade, led by Captain Lawrence, made a lodgment on one corner of it—a lodgment so uncertain that I immediately ordered up Colonel Pennypacker's brigade, which, inspired and led by him and Colonel Moore, reached the third traverse and made our foothold secure. Such are the official records of the battle.

I wish to touch one other point. Badeau writes in this same history:

“The fighting was continued from traverse to traverse, until at 9 o'clock the troops had nearly reached the bastion. Bell had been killed and Pennypacker wounded, and Curtis now sent back for re-enforcements. The advance party was in imminent peril, for the guns from both bastions and the mound batteries were turned upon them. At this crisis a staff officer brought orders from Terry to stop fighting and begin intrenching. Curtis was inflamed with the magnificent rage of battle, and fairly roared at this command: “Then we shall lose whatever we have gained. The enemy will drive us from here in the morning.” While he spoke he was struck by a shell, and fell senseless to the earth. The hero of Fort Fisher had fallen, and the fort was not yet carried. Ames, who was near him, sent an officer to Terry to report that Curtis was killed, and that his dying request was that the fighting might go on. It was also Ames's opinion that the battle should proceed. Terry caught the contagion, and determined to continue the assault, even if it became necessary to abandon the line of defence towards Wilmington. Abbott's re-enforcements were at once ordered forward, and as they entered the fort the rebels on the bastion gave way and Fort Fisher was carried.”

It is due to Badeau to state that he says in a note that he “obtained the account of this assault from a paper written by an aide-de-camp to General Curtis.”

This remarkable statement deserves a moment's consideration. If it be true, then all the chief honors must fall on one head. But it is not true. If Terry gave orders to stop fighting and begin intrenching, who can believe that it was through the "contagion caught" by him from Curtis that the fight continued, or that he would "abandon the line towards Wilmington" to try uncertainties at the fort?

Terry reports:

"When Bell's brigade was ordered into action I foresaw that more troops would probably be needed, and sent an order for Abbott's brigade to move down from the north line, at the same time requesting Captain Breese to replace them with his sailors and marines. I also directed General Paine to send me one of the strongest regiments of his own division; these troops arrived at dusk and reported to General Ames."

This treatment of Terry and the ignoring of division, brigade, and regimental commanders find no justification in the facts. Terry is entitled to every honor due his position. Pennypacker and Bell can not be swept aside so lightly, nor the regimental commanders, whose names I need not give here.

I would say specifically to that reference to myself, that I did not send any request, "dying" or other, from Curtis to Terry that the fighting might go on.

If Terry intended my division to stop fighting and begin intrenching he did not send the order to Curtis, one of my brigade commanders, nor would Terry send re-enforcements to Curtis over my head.

According to this aide, Curtis was wounded at 9 o'clock while criticising Terry's order to stop fighting and begin intrenching. I say in my report that Curtis was wounded "a short time before dark" on that brief winter's day.

I saw him in, and emerge from, a covered way at the west end of the parapet. He approached me and began to speak; almost at the same time a shot struck him down. Colonel Daggett, who succeeded to the command of Curtis's brigade, reports two days after: "Curtis was seriously

wounded about 4.30." General Carleton, who was with me at the time, and picked up his sword as he fell, says Curtis was shot at about 4.30.

And yet Badeau would have us believe that Curtis was wounded while criticising Terry's order to stop fighting and begin intrenching, at 9 o'clock, some four hours after Curtis fell senseless at my feet.

In fact, he was wounded before dark, about an hour and a half after the battle began, and some four hours before the fort was taken. The exact minute is of no importance. Participants in a battle are poor judges of passing time.

In this instance it is fixed accurately enough in the official reports of Daggett, Abbott, and myself, as well as Carleton's statement of his recollections.

General Terry says in his official report of the battle:

"Brigadier General Curtis and Colonels Pennypacker, Bell, and Abbott, the brigade commanders, led them with the utmost gallantry. Curtis was wounded after fighting in the front rank, rifle in hand; Pennypacker, while carrying the standard of one of his regiments, the first man in a charge over a traverse; Bell was mortally wounded near the palisade."

This is all, literally all, Terry says of exceptional services by Curtis. "Fighting in the front rank, rifle in hand," is most commendable under the circumstances, but it does not in itself justify claims for exceptional honors.

My report says:

"The conduct of the officers and men of this division was most gallant. . . . Where the name of every officer and man engaged in this desperate conflict should be submitted, I shall at present only be able to give a few of those most conspicuous. It is hoped all may be properly rewarded.

"Brevet Brig.-Gen. N. M. Curtis, commanding First Brigade, was prominent throughout the day for his bravery, coolness, and judgment. His services can not be overestimated. He fell a short time before dark, seriously wounded in the head by a canister shot.

"Colonel Pennypacker, commanding the Second Brigade, was seriously wounded while planting his colors on the third traverse

of the work. This officer was surpassed by none, and his absence during the day was most deeply felt and seriously regretted.

"Col. L. Bell, commanding Third Brigade, was mortally wounded while crossing the bridge in advance of the palisading. He was an able and efficient officer; one not easily replaced.

"Col. J. W. Moore, 203d Pennsylvania Volunteers, behaved with the most distinguished gallantry. He was killed while passing the second traverse of the fort, in advance of his regiment, waving his colors. Few equalled, none surpassed, this brave officer."

My report on Curtis is not less generous than Terry's; but it was not intended to, and I doubt if it does, sustain his pretensions of this day.

The official records, written thirty-two years ago, must be the foundation for all claims of honor and distinction. Nothing can now be added to them or taken from them. By them we all must be judged.

Misrepresentations greatly injured General Butler, and deeply humiliated General Weitzel. Truth has been outraged—truth overslow in the pursuit of falsehood, not always the most agreeable company.

In this paper I have attempted to right a wrong. I have given few opinions of my own. I have called up the actors themselves, and have let them speak in their own words—sometimes under oath—always under a sense of grave responsibility.

Authorities.

Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, vol. ii., Fort Fisher Expedition. *War of the Rebellion Records*, vol. xlii., part 1. *War Records*, vol. xlvi., part 1. *War Records*, vol. xlvi., part 2. *The Century Company's War Books*, vol. iv. Letter of Col. Wm. Lamb, dated Norfolk, Va.

THE CAPTURE OF FORT FISHER.

READ BEFORE THE COMMANDERY BY
BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL NEWTON MARTIN CURTIS, U. S. V.,
MAY 5, 1897.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FORT.

COLONEL LAMB took command of the fort, July 4, 1862; he found it a quadrilateral work with six guns, flanked north and south by five detached batteries carrying eleven guns, four of which were casemated. Only one of the seventeen guns was of modern ordnance. He stated that the frigate *Minnesota* could have destroyed the works and driven them out in a few hours. During his occupation of the fort he made it the largest and best equipped fortification constructed by the Confederates, as shown in his description of it as it stood before the attack.

"At the land-face of Fort Fisher, five miles from the intrenched camp at Sugar Loaf, the peninsula was about half a mile wide. This face commenced about a hundred feet from the river with a half bastion, and extended with a heavy curtain to a full bastion on the ocean side, where it joined the sea-face without moat, scarp, or counterscarp. The outer slope was twenty feet high from the berm to the top of the parapet, at an angle of 45° , and was sodded with marsh grass which grew luxuriantly. The parapet was twenty-five feet thick, with an inclination of only one foot. The revetment was five feet nine inches from the floor of the gun-chambers, and these were some twelve feet or more from the interior plane. The guns were all mounted en barbette on Columbiad carriages; there was not a single casemated gun in the fort. Between the gun-chambers,

containing one or two guns each (there were twenty heavy guns on the land-face), were heavy traverses, exceeding in size any known to engineers, to protect from an enfilading fire. They extended twelve feet on the parapet and were twelve feet in height above the parapet, running back thirty feet. The gun-chambers were reached from the rear by steps. In each traverse was an alternate magazine or bomb-proof, the latter ventilated by an air-chamber. Passageways penetrated the traverses in the interior of the work, forming additional bomb-proofs for the reliefs for the guns.

"The sea-face for a hundred yards from the northeast bastion was of the same massive character as the land-face. A crescent battery intended for four guns adjoined this. A series of batteries extended for three-quarters of a mile along the sea, connected by an infantry curtain. These batteries had heavy traverses ten or twelve feet high above the top of the parapets. On this line was a bomb-proof electric battery connected with a system of submarine torpedoes. Farther along a mound battery sixty feet high was erected, with two heavy guns which had a plunging fire on the channel; this was connected with the battery north of it by a light curtain. Following the line of the works it was one mile from the angle of the sea- and land-faces to the mound, and upon this line twenty-four heavy guns were mounted. From the mound for nearly a mile to the end of the point was a level sand plain scarcely three feet above high tide, and much of it was submerged during gales. At the point Battery Buchanan, four guns, in the shape of an ellipse, commanded the inlet, its two 11-inch guns covering the approach by land. An advanced redoubt with a 24-pounder was added after the first expedition. A wharf for large steamers was in close proximity to these works. As a defence against infantry there was a system of subterra torpedoes extending across the peninsula, five to six hundred feet from the land-face, and so disconnected that the explosion of one would not affect the others; inside the torpedoes, about fifty feet from the berm of the work,

extending from river bank to sea-shore, was a heavy palisade of sharpened logs nine feet high, pierced for musketry. There was a redoubt guarding the sally-port, from which two Napoleons were run out, as occasion required. At the river end of the palisade was a deep and muddy slough, across which was a bridge over which the river road entered the fort. Commanding this bridge was a Napoleon gun. There were three mortars in rear of the land-face."

ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE CONFEDERACY.

Thomas E. Taylor, an English merchant, one of the most active and successful blockade-runners during the war, says in his book, *Running the Blockade*, page 139:

"That morning (in Richmond, Va., December, 1864) I had an appointment with the Commissary General, who divulged to me under promise of secrecy that Lee's army was in terrible straits, and had in fact rations for only thirty days. He asked me if I could help him. I said I would do my best, and after some negotiations he undertook to pay me a profit of 350 per cent. upon any provisions and meat I could bring in within the next three weeks. . . . Although it was a hard trip it paid well, as we had on board coming out a most magnificent cargo, a great deal of sea-island cotton, the profits upon which and the provisions I had taken in amounted to over eighty-five thousand pounds—not bad work for about twenty days."

January 15, 1865, the day of the capture of Fort Fisher, Mr. Taylor wrote from Nassau to his partners in Liverpool, England:

"General Lee told me the other day that if they did not keep Wilmington they could not save Richmond. They nearly had Fort Fisher—they were within sixty yards of it, and had they pushed on as they ought to have done could have taken it. It was a terrific bombardment; they estimated that about 40,000 shells were sent into it. Colonel Lamb behaved like a brick—splendidly. I got the last of the Whitworths in, and they are now at the fort. They are very hard up for food in the field, but the Banshee has this time 600 barrels of pork and 1500 boxes of meat—enough to feed Lee's army for a month."

Alexander H. Stephens said of the capture of Fort Fisher in his book, *The War between the States*, vol. ii., page 619:

"The fall of this fort was one of the greatest disasters which had befallen our cause from the beginning of the war—not excepting the loss of Vicksburg or Atlanta. Forts Fisher and Caswell guarded the entrance to the Cape Fear River, and prevented the complete blockade of the port of Wilmington, through which a limited foreign commerce had been carried on during the whole time. It was by means of what cotton could thus be carried out, that we had been enabled to get along financially as well as we had; and at this point also a considerable number of arms and various munitions of war, as well as large supplies of subsistence, had been introduced. All other ports: except Wilmington, had long since been closed by naval siege."

General Grant, in the 61st chapter of the 2d volume of his *Personal Memoirs*, refers to Fort Fisher in the following words:

"Up to January, 1865, the enemy occupied Fort Fisher, at the mouth of Cape Fear River and below the city of Wilmington. This port was of immense importance to the Confederates, because it formed their principal inlet for blockade-runners, by means of which they brought in from abroad such supplies and munitions of war as they could not procure at home. It was equally important to us to get possession of it, not only because it was desirable to cut off their supplies so as to insure a speedy termination of the war, but also because foreign governments, particularly the British Government, were constantly threatening that unless ours could maintain the blockade off that coast they should cease to recognize any blockade. For these reasons I determined, with the concurrence of the Navy Department, in December, to send an expedition against Fort Fisher for the purpose of capturing it."

THE FIRST JOINT EXPEDITION.

On the 6th of December, 1864, General Grant issued written instructions to General Butler specifying that

"the object of the expedition under General Weitzel is to close to the enemy the port of Wilmington. . . . This will

be gained by effecting a landing on the mainland between the Cape Fear River and the Atlantic north of the north entrance to the river. Should this landing be effected whilst the enemy still hold Fort Fisher and the batteries guarding the entrance to the river, then the troops should entrench themselves, and by co-operating with the Navy effect the reduction and capture of those places."

The 2d Division of the Twenty-fourth Corps, under the command of Brigadier-General Adelbert Ames, and the 1st Division of the Twenty-fifth Corps, under the command of Brigadier-General C. J. Paine, came to Hampton Roads on the 8th of December, 1864, and were transferred to ocean transports; on the 13th the transports sailed, and on the 15th rendezvoused off Masonborough Inlet, North Carolina. The steamer *Louisiana*, loaded with 215 tons of powder, had been sent forward under convoy of the Navy. On the 24th of December the *Louisiana* was sent inshore to a point 850 yards north of the fort and exploded by Commander Rhind 250 yards from the shore at 1.30 A. M. The only effect of the explosion was the awakening of a part of the garrison. Admiral Porter kept the fort under a continuous fire from his fleet from the morning of December 24th until the evening of December 25th, only slackening the fire from dark to daylight. At 1 o'clock P. M. on the 25th the troops began landing under the protection of the naval division commanded by Captain O. S. Glisson. Five hundred of my brigade were put into row-boats, furnished by the transports and the Navy, and in a single line moved to the shore. I preceded the line in Captain Glisson's gig, in charge of Lieutenant Farquhar, and on landing carried the Captain's flag and raised it on a sand dune to indicate where the troops should land. Before the men reached the shore General Weitzel landed and directed me to at once form my troops in line as they came from the boats and marched down the beach, throwing out flankers as we proceeded. A company of Confederates in a small earthwork, half a mile south, raised a white flag; the Navy sent boats ashore and took off as prisoners two officers and sixty-five men. Con-

tinuing the march south we halted at a small earthwork, which General Weitzel thought was 800 yards north of Fort Fisher, but later measurements showed it to have been 2200 yards. Here an examination of the fort was made by a field-glass and it appeared to have sustained no injury from the naval fire beyond the displacing of a single gun and the breaking of a few piles of the stockade. General Weitzel left me at this point to return to General Butler, directing me to take command of the troops as they arrived but not to bring on an engagement, and to report to General Butler any matters of importance, stating that he would leave a signal sergeant to transmit any reports I might wish to make. The sergeant did not appear. About half of the men first landed had been sent out as flankers. I sent forward forty men toward the left salient of the fort, leaving the remainder with orders to retain at that point all troops that might come forward. I followed the skirmish line, and when we were within fifty yards of the parapet the staff carrying the garrison flag was shot away by the Navy, and Capt. W. H. Walling, 142d N. Y., went through the ditch and stockade and up the parapet and brought it away at 4.20 P. M. About the same time Lieutenant George Simpson, 142d N. Y., of my staff climbed a telegraph pole and cut the wire, breaking telegraphic connection between the fort and Wilmington. Having no means of promptly communicating with headquarters, I went to the beach with two men carrying the captured flag and exhibited it at a point about 150 yards north of the east salient of the fort. Before starting to carry the flag to the beach, I had sent an order to Lieutenant Colonel Barney, 142d N. Y., to bring forward to Battery Holland, an earthwork half a mile north of the west salient of the fort, all the troops which had arrived at the reserve. No movement of the troops had been made when I reached the beach, and I walked up the beach to ascertain why my order to advance had not been obeyed, and on arriving at the reserve learned that a short time before the receipt of my order to go forward, General Butler had ordered the

troops to retire from the front of the fort. Feeling confident that General Butler had issued his order without knowing the condition of the fort, I sent an officer with this message:

“Your order to retire is held in abeyance that you may know of the true condition of the fort: the garrison has offered no resistance; the flagstaff of the fort was cut by a naval shot and one of my officers brought from the parapet the garrison flag; another officer cut the telegraph wire connecting the fort with Wilmington; my skirmishers are now at the parapet.”

I marched all the troops which had come forward to Battery Holland, and sent the 117th N. Y. to advance along the river and establish pickets north of Craig's Landing and extend them from the river to the beach. In this movement a Confederate major surrendered a battalion of Junior Reserves of North Carolina to an officer and two men. About thirty escaped, but 227 were brought in and carried north on the return of the expedition. A second order was brought me to retire, which I answered as before, adding my later operations. I did this under the impression that my former report had not been received, which I learned later was the case.

Soon after sending my second report, Colonels Comstock and Jackson came to Battery Holland, closely followed by General Ames. To these officers I fully explained the condition of the garrison and my captures, and informed them that the Navy was able to keep the garrison in the bomb-proofs, and that after an hour's cannonading the fort could be successfully assaulted, and urged them to communicate this information to General Butler. But they did not regard the proposed attack as feasible, and moreover did not wish to assume any responsibility for my disobedience of orders. They left, and soon after I received the third order to retire, with the information that all the troops had re-embarked except those at the front. I then drew in my pickets and marched up the beach to the point of landing with my prisoners and sent the captured officers to General Butler's ship, after which the

surf prevented the further re-embarkation of troops. With between 600 and 700 men of my brigade and 220 prisoners we remained on the beach without fresh water, provisions, or blankets in a sleet storm until Tuesday afternoon, the 27th. We were finally taken off through a heavy surf by a life-boat, which passed between a transport and the beach by means of a rope extending from the transport to a stake on shore. When the last load had entered the boat I cut the line near the stake and taking hold of the end was dragged through the breakers and aboard the transport; then all vessels carrying troops turned their prows to the north and steamed for Hampton Roads. While at breakfast in the restaurant at Fort Monroe, on the morning of the 29th, Colonel Babcock brought me word that General Grant desired to see me on his boat then at the wharf.

In reply to the General's questions I related all that had been done on the expedition and what I had seen. Our interview was interrupted by the arrival of an officer from General Sherman, and I was informed that I would be questioned later. The same day I received a telegram from General Weitzel ordering me to City Point, and there I related to him all I had learned about Fort Fisher, and repeated my opinion that it might have been captured had an attempt been made. My statement and those of three officers and three men of my brigade who had been on or at the base of the parapet of the fort were taken down by a staff-officer and sent to Colonel Comstock of General Grant's staff, and were forwarded by him to the Secretary of War to be filed with General Butler's report.

When General Butler gave the order for the troops to re-embark he had received no report from the troops at the front, and fully three-fourths of his command were then on the beach. It required more time to re-embark the troops on the beach than it would have required to have landed those still on the transports with a full supply of provisions and ammunition.

The Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the

War made an exhaustive investigation of subjects not covered by General Butler's orders and approved his conduct in regard to speculative matters not mentioned in his orders. The findings of the committee did not show that the failure of the expedition was wholly due to the fact that General Grant's specific instructions had been disregarded.

THE SECOND EXPEDITION TO FORT FISHER AND ITS CAPTURE.

The second expedition was composed of the troops which had returned from the first expedition not disabled, and Colonel J. C. Abbott's brigade of the 1st Division of the Twenty-fourth Corps. Before the landing of troops General Henry L. Abbot joined the force with Companies A, B, G, and L of the 1st Connecticut Artillery, Myrick's Battery E, 3d U. S. Artillery, Capt. R. H. Lee's 16th New York Light Battery, Major F. W. Prince's battalion, 16th New York Heavy Artillery, and Companies A and I of the 15th New York Engineers. General Ames joined the expedition at the same time from a hospital boat which left Hampton Roads one day after the expedition sailed. On coming on board the *Atlantic* he addressed me with bitter and insulting words, alleging that I had been guilty of a "shabby trick" in sailing from Hampton Roads without him. He apparently failed to consider that he had not been on the ship during the ten hours when my troops and all his staff had been on board, that his staff were informed of the sailing orders as soon as they came into my hands, fully seven hours before the ship moved out of the Roads, and that his entire staff believed, at the hour of going to breakfast as the ship was passing the Capes, that he was on board. His words were resented and their withdrawal demanded, which was done within the next hour, but his subsequent conduct compelled me from that time to refuse all intercourse with him not required by the strictest official duties.

On Friday morning, January 13th, the transports moved up to the place where our previous landing had been effected,

and under cover of the naval vessels the troops began to disembark; although in a heavy surf all were landed, together with extra rations, ammunition, and intrenching tools, at 3 o'clock. The troops were at once put to work constructing a line of breastworks from the beach to the Cape Fear River, which was completed before daylight on the morning of the 14th. General Ames's division was then withdrawn from the works and General Paine was directed to hold the line with his division and Abbott's brigade.

Then for the third time since General Ames had rejoined his command after his unexplained absence he requested General Terry to promise him that he would not detail any officer or organization of his division by name to perform any special duty. When this request was denied he set forth his grievances, stating that "General Curtis had ignored him in consulting Generals Grant and Weitzel, had not communicated to him the orders for sailing, and so thoroughly did he distrust General Curtis and his brigade that he would not be held responsible for anything they might be directed to do." General Terry replied "that he would direct General Curtis to report to him and thereafter he would receive from him all instructions until the work in hand was disposed of." These facts were given to me by General Terry in Richmond, Virginia, when I was serving as his chief of staff in the Department of Virginia.

In notifying me that I should report to him until further orders, General Terry directed me to accompany him and Colonel Comstock with my brigade down the peninsula that he might examine the enemy's fortifications. While we were marching down, the Confederate gunboat *Chickamauga*, lying in the Cape Fear River, fired on us and one shell seriously wounded Capt. James H. Reeves and three men of his regiment, the 3d New York.

After General Terry had completed his examination of the fort and its approaches he asked: "Do you still believe the fort can be carried by an assault with such force as I can spare from the line established last night, the

holding of which is of the first importance?" I replied that I believed the three brigades already withdrawn from the line could capture the fort by an assault if the dispositions were properly made, and if the Navy should support the troops from start to finish. He said: "It has already been decided that in case an assault is ordered you will make it. I will see Admiral Porter this evening and we will determine what course to pursue."

General Terry and Colonel Comstock then left for the reserve, having directed me to report any incidents I might think it important for him to know.

The ground in front of the west third of the parapet was swampy, in parts of it water was two or more feet deep, and opposite the gate, at the west end, was a bridge from which the enemy had removed the floor, leaving only the stringers. At the eastern third the ground was much higher and served as a natural glacis so that an assaulting force would be kept under fire from its start until it reached the parapet, but an attacking force approaching the left end of the parapet would pass under the plane of fire at some distance from the parapet. As soon as it was dark I deployed two lines of skirmishers, one with guns and the other with shovels, at a distance of five paces. The line with muskets advanced twenty paces before the line with shovels and stood on guard, while the men with shovels threw up breastworks high enough to protect a man lying on his face; then the rear line advanced, exchanging shovels for muskets as it passed the front line, which threw up breastworks in turn while the former shovellers stood guard in their front. In this manner the troops advanced close to the wet ground, having constructed four parallel lines of breastworks, which were later strengthened by fatigue parties. In advance of the last line of the newly constructed breastworks and to the left, where the ground was higher and dry, a much higher and heavier breastwork was built, in which forty men selected on account of their skill as marksmen were stationed. They were to remain in this position until the next night or until an assault should

be made. In the event of an assault they were to join in it, and before the advance should be made they were to prevent the loading of the eight- and ten-inch Columbiads which pointed toward our line of approach. This work was completed before dawn and my men, except a small guard, slept upon their arms.

Before noon of the 15th, General Terry with Colonel Comstock came to Battery Holland and informed me that it had been agreed between Admiral Porter and himself that an assault upon the fort should be made at 3 o'clock; that 1600 sailors and 400 marines should attack the east end of the parapet and that my brigade should attack the left and be followed by the brigades of Pennypacker and Bell. He approved the work I had performed during the night, and sent sixty men of the 13th Indiana to join the forty from my brigade left in advance, placing them under the command of Lieut. S. M. Zent. Up to the advance of the attacking party these men performed important service and they joined in with the first line going to the parapet.

General Terry said to me: "You stated yesterday that you thought an assault would be successful 'if the dispositions were properly made.' Your brigade is to lead, and I would like to know your views as to the formation." I replied that I wished to advance in line, brigade front, to make advances from one rifle-pit to the next, all lying down at each, every movement to be governed by the action of the enemy in coming to the parapet, and the final rush to be made when the enemy showed an intention to remain on the parapet. As I advanced, the enemy's infantry would doubtless mount the parapet. We would then lie down while the Navy drove them back; then we would advance to the next rifle-pit and so repeat until the enemy's infantry refused to leave the parapet, when we would make the final rush and get under the plane of fire before a second volley could be fired upon us. General Terry said: "Do you not wish to strike them in column with a hammer-head?" I replied: "A single line can advance

with little loss, but a column would be severely punished from the start; my right regiment will go straight to the left salient, and the three other regiments will oblique to the right and at the parapet will be in column for about one-third of the advancing line." The subject was discussed with Colonel Comstock, who approved my plan, which General Terry then accepted and ordered its execution. I then said to General Terry: "The final rush will be made when you see me rise in the middle of my line and hear me call aloud; soon after the brigade will pass through the stockade up the parapet, and when I raise my hat send Pennypacker's brigade." He replied: "With your brigade on the parapet I shall feel certain of success; a lodgment there assures victory." About noon Pennypacker's and Bell's brigades, under command of General Ames, came to the front and halted in rear of my command.

A short time before advancing to the place from which the real movement was to be made, a naval officer, Lieutenant Porter I believe, came to me and said: "General Terry informs me that you lead in the assault, and I desire to learn your plans that the sailors and marines on the beach may move at the same time you do." I explained the plan already stated, and concluded with expressing my regret that the Navy forces were not differently formed; they were then closely massed. He replied: "I am sorry Army officers find fault with the Navy. We are trying to help them on their own ground and they ought to be satisfied." I stated:

"We want your help very much, both your guns on the ships and your men on shore; but your formation is bad, your front is too narrow for the depth of your column, and going into action as your men are now formed you will get fearfully punished and no good will be rendered except that much of the fire directed to your forces will be saved from my line. I condemn your formation as a landsman; I would not criticise nautical matters."

Two thousand men from the Navy, from sixty ships, unacquainted with one another or with the service they

were to undertake, were brought together on the beach to perform a most hazardous work. The number of officers was small—entirely too few for the number of men engaged. As before stated, the force was too compact. Their first line should have been longer and thinner, and their main body kept out of the fire until the first line had reached the fort. Such a plan requires good men—veterans; it is, however, the way to assault fortifications with the least loss of life, almost the only plan by which to achieve success.

Before advancing to the first line every officer and man had been instructed as to his movements and the order in which they would take place, and that the point of attack would be between the first and the second traverses.

Just before the preliminary movements were begun Capt. A. G. Lawrence, of General Ames's staff, came to me and asked if he could go with my brigade. I replied that he could if he would not interfere with its movements, and sent him to Lieut.-Col. F. X. Meyer, commanding the 117th New York, at the right of the line. Captain Lawrence understood that I was not under the command of his chief, and that he could not accompany my brigade without my permission. He did not go as the representative of another, nor did he make the slightest attempt to direct the movements of the men. He fell at the stockade, seriously wounded, the victim of a valor which he conspicuously exhibited in every battle in which he participated.

The preliminary advances were made in a succession of thin lines, number one of the first line going forward to a rifle-pit, followed by number two; the rear rank advancing in the same manner. By this method only one-fourth of the line was exposed to the enemy's fire.

Three short advances were made. During each the garrison came to the parapet; when the line halted the garrison returned to the bomb-proofs, each time remaining longer on the parapet and suffering greater damage from the naval fire. When the enemy seemed determined to remain on the parapet the final rush was made. I arose

from the middle of the line and called out "Forward," advancing as I arose from the ground. Each officer and man had been instructed to run as he got up, and to go forward in silence. Cheering was positively forbidden, the object being to keep the men from expending their breath needlessly, and it was all-important to save it for the final rush up the parapet. We were fifteen paces to the front before we reached the usual height of a running man, which is about one-third less than his height when standing. The result of this movement was to cause the first volley to pass over our heads with but little damage. Had the order been given, "Attention; first battalion, guide right; second, third, and fourth battalions, oblique to the right," many in the line would have been shot down before a start was made.

The naval fire had made many openings in the stockade, but not enough to allow speedy passage through it. One hundred axes which had been distributed in the brigade were vigorously used, under a galling fire, in making openings for the men. The first forty or fifty through the stockade climbed up the parapet and met the enemy between the first and the second traverses. In this space were two Columbiads, one disabled, the enemy loading the other. The charge had been sent home, but the ramrod not withdrawn, when we overpowered the gunners. The man at the breech put out his hand with a primer to discharge the piece, after his surrender had been demanded. A sharp blow from my sabre on his outstretched hand quickly dissuaded him, and the charge remained until the captors had leisure to withdraw it.

The first battle-flag to come up was a marker of the 117th New York, which was promptly placed on the second traverse. Its right to remain there was tested in a hand-to-hand contest with swords and bayonets, in which the Yankees won.

We then went down to the floor of the fort and secured the men serving a Napoleon gun at the gate and a number of infantry posted at the stockade west of the gate. These

men were sent to the rear without escort. Their capture removed the chief obstacle to an approach by the road. At this time the Second Brigade began to enter the fort, some through the gate and others over the parapet. Upon returning to the parapet I found that a large number of my brigade had succeeded in getting through the stockade, and were advancing to the place first captured, where they were being rapidly joined by men of the Second Brigade.

At the time we made the grand rush for the left of the parapet, the naval column moved in mass upon the sea bastion. The enemy believing this to be the main attack turned upon them all the guns which could sweep the beach, and massed more than half of his infantry behind the right of the parapet to repel the attack. Colonel Lamb conducted this defence of the sea bastion in person. The enemy's fire upon the naval column was terribly effective, spreading death and disorder. Except a few who reached the stockade those not disabled soon retired.

General Whiting occupied a position on the parapet midway between the sea bastion and the sally-port. The repulse of the naval column caused the troops under Colonel Lamb and General Whiting to cheer vigorously, the cheers being heard above the roar of the cannon; but their exultation was short, for upon looking to the west they saw two United States flags on the left of the parapet—their comrades unable to remove them. General Whiting hurried with the troops near him to the left of the line, and joined in the contest which we were making for the third traverse. In this hand-to-hand conflict he received a mortal wound and was carried to a bomb-proof. Colonel Pennypacker, commanding the Second Brigade, was severely wounded while placing the colors of his regiment on this traverse, and Colonel Moore, 203d Pennsylvania, was killed while advancing with the colors of his regiment to the same position. Lieutenant-Colonel Barney and Major Jones, 142d New York, were wounded here, but soon after re-entered the contest. Here Captain Thomas, 117th New York, was killed. Lieutenant-Colonel Meyer and Major Bagg,

117th New York, both wounded, and many officers of the Second Brigade, whose names I cannot give, came to the front and joined in the contest until our possession of the traverse was undisputed. Our killed and wounded on the parapet impeded our advance to the fourth traverse so that we were scarcely able to go forward without treading upon them. Colonel Lamb then came up with troops to meet us at the fourth traverse, bringing into action a larger number than we had met at the third. Our numbers were also increased by those who joined us as they came upon the parapet. The struggle for the fourth traverse was the hottest and most prolonged single contest of the day. The loss of life was great on both sides. The killed and wounded were set aside to make room for their comrades who came impetuously forward to support the respective sides. In this contest Colonel Lamb was seriously wounded and was taken to the same bomb-proof occupied by General Whiting. Our success in this fearful struggle turned the tide, the enemy's defence became less spirited and effective, and each succeeding traverse was taken with less difficulty.

The naval fire throughout the day had been delivered with singular accuracy, at the rate of two or three shells per second, in front of the assaulting forces; but at the fifth traverse a shot went wide of its mark and killed or disabled all but four men in our front line. Fearing that a slackening of our fire would invite a countercharge, I myself discharged the guns of the killed and disabled men until reinforcements were brought forward. A sudden emergency compelled this action. It was not done to encourage the soldiers—no such efforts were needed to quicken their zeal. Men unable to stand and fire their pieces handed up the guns of their dead and helpless comrades, and when given back reloaded them again and again, exhibiting a frenzied zeal and unselfish devotion that seemingly nothing but death could chill. Within twenty minutes I found wounded men dead who had thus handed me their guns.

While we were capturing these traverses, others on the

floor of the fort fought the enemy in bomb-proofs and behind obstructions near the parapet, keeping pace with us. Lieutenant-Colonel Lyman, 203d Pennsylvania, was killed while actively urging this line forward. Several company officers were in this detachment, and vigorously conducted these operations after his death, among them Captain William H. Walling, 142d New York Volunteers, who on the first expedition had captured the garrison flag of the fort. Captain R. D. Morehouse, 142d New York Volunteers, in charge of a party captured a large number of Confederates in the sally-port, from which they had energetically opposed the advance of our forces on the floor of the fort; but our progress on the parapet rendered their position untenable, and by a skilful movement he captured them before they could retire to other defences. His skill and bravery were as conspicuous then as his modest dignity is noticeable among his companions of the Loyal Legion. This capture was considered by the Confederates a dishonorable surrender. They did not know then that their men had been compelled to surrender only when retreat was impossible.

Progress was more easily and steadily made until we gained possession of the seventh traverse at 4.45 P. M., where it was found that our best marksmen could drive the gunners from the Columbiad on the sea bastion, with which the enemy had enfiladed the ditch and given the assailants more trouble than with any other piece in the fort. When it was discovered that this gun could be silenced, the project of marching up the ditch and capturing the sea bastion was decided upon, and men at the west end of the fort were summoned to undertake it. I sent Corporal Jones, of the color-guard of the 117th New York, to the west end of the fort to bring these men forward. He came back, and stated that General Ames had directed him to return and say that men could not be sent, but spades to fortify would be furnished. My orderly A. D. Knight was next sent to obtain men, and directed to state the object of the movement to be made. He soon returned

and stated that General Ames had ordered him to say that the men were exhausted and no further advance would be attempted until reinforcements arrived in the morning; that we should hold the ground occupied, if possible, and that intrenching tools would be sent to us. I directed Orderly Knight to go back and request officers under my rank to collect men and bring them forward, so that the attack could be made before dark; to say that the resistance of the enemy was less than at the beginning of the battle, and that the capture of the bastion would compel an early surrender. Knight soon returned with an armful of spades which General Ames had ordered him to carry to me that I might fortify and hold our position until fresh troops came into the fort. I threw the spades over the traverse to the Confederates. Being convinced that General Ames intended to suspend operations until reinforcements came in, I directed Silas W. Kempton, Mate U. S. Navy, who had reported to me early in the engagement and volunteered to serve in whatever capacity he might be useful, to go for the second time to General Terry, now to urge him to have the troops then engaged in throwing up fortifications in rear of the left end of the parapet to join in a general advance, and take possession of the fort before reinforcements could be sent in by the enemy. I instructed Kempton to state that the enemy were offering slight resistance, and that a bold push would secure a victory already substantially won. This young sailor had previously been sent to General Terry, after we had won possession of the fourth traverse, to ask him to have the naval fire in front of our advancing lines increased, if possible, and to have the fuses cut shorter, so as to cause the explosion of the shells nearer the parapet. Many had passed beyond the fort and were lost by exploding in the marsh and river. The zeal and intelligence of Mr. Kempton commanded my warmest admiration.

I then directed Capt. David B. Magill, 117th New York, to take the next traverse with the first men who should come up, and went to the west end of the parapet

and to the floor of the fort in rear of it, to obtain men to march up the ditch to the sea bastion. While collecting them on the floor of the fort in rear of the first and second traverses, General Ames addressed me, for the first time since the movement on the fort had begun, and said: "I have two or three times sent you word to fortify your position and hold it until reinforcements can be sent to aid us; the men are exhausted, and I will not order them to go forward." I directed his attention to two steamboats in the Cape Fear River loaded with Confederate troops waiting for darkness to enable them to land, which they could not do while it was light because of the naval fire, and said: "Should they succeed in landing they may be able to drive us out; therefore, the fort should be captured before fresh troops come to the enemy." I informed him that the garrison was resisting with less spirit than earlier in the day, and asserted that complete victory was within our grasp if we aroused ourselves and pushed the advantage we surely had, and that I intended to conduct the movement up the ditch to the sea bastion if I could get but fifty men. Several said, "We will go." At this time the sun was just disappearing, at 5.15 P.M.,—as stated by the Navy Department, two hours and five minutes after the opening of the battle.

While the volunteers were assembling I went farther into the fort, and had ascended a magazine or sand dune for the purpose of looking into the angle of the bastion I intended to attack, when I was struck and disabled by two fragments of a shell, one destroying the left eye and the other carrying away a portion of the frontal bone. I was unconscious for several hours.

From official and other trustworthy sources it is learned that after sundown no efforts were made to advance our lines, except the capture of an additional traverse by the troops left under command of Captain Magill when I started out to collect men to go up the ditch. About 8 o'clock a regiment of colored troops from General Paine's line was sent to General Ames to assist in taking possession

of the fort. He directed them to stack arms outside the fort and join the men in the rear of the left end of the parapet in throwing up breastworks to protect the assailants from a countercharge by the garrison. Late in the afternoon the sailors and marines had been withdrawn from the beach and sent to relieve Abbott's brigade which was brought down to the fort. The 3d New Hampshire was placed on the right of Abbott's brigade, and when Major Trickey in command of it was directed by General Abbott to take the traverse on that part of the parapet where the greatest resistance was expected to be made, the Major called his attention to the fact that he had less than eighty men in his command, and that a greater number might be needed to carry the traverses. General Abbott informed him he would be supported and that his regiment was specially named by General Terry for that duty. The fact that the regiment was armed with repeating rifles may have influenced General Terry in making the selection. The order for the placing of the 3d New Hampshire as stated by General Abbott shows that General Terry kept in close touch with the several brigades, and gave personal attention to their movements throughout the battle. When Abbott's brigade reached the unoccupied portion of the parapet the enemy received it with a volley, but not heavy enough to check its progress. It marched over the parapet, across the floor of the fort, parallel to the sea-face, and southward to Battery Buchanan, where the garrison of Fort Fisher was found unarmed and demoralized. These operations of Abbott's brigade were successfully carried out with the loss of four men killed and twenty-three wounded. At dark General Whiting and Colonel Lamb were carried to Battery Buchanan, the former mortally and the latter seriously wounded. It was proposed to send them across the river in small boats, as many had been, but they determined to remain and share the fate of the garrison.

The troops entered the fort without hesitation and vied one with another, officers and men alike, for possession of

the work. The loss in the early part of the engagement of Colonel Bell, commanding Third Brigade, and Colonel Smith, 112th New York, both mortally wounded before reaching the work, and of Colonel Moore, killed soon after mounting the parapet, was sorely felt throughout the day. They were soldiers of marked ability, veterans who had won distinction in every campaign in which the army to which they belonged had been engaged. Colonel Penny-packer, commanding Second Brigade, was seriously wounded early in the engagement. This distinguished officer had put his brigade into position and given it an impulse which continued throughout the day. The loss of no officer could have been greater. At the end of the first hour several officers and men were disabled or bearing wounds that would have justified their retirement from an ordinary engagement, and a suspension of hostilities would have followed had not the troops been of the highest grade. Nine-tenths of them were veterans who had served in the campaigns in Virginia and the Carolinas, and had fought in every battle from Drury's Farm and Cold Harbor to the last battle in the campaign before Petersburg and Richmond. There was not an officer or man in the four brigades who did not merit the highest commendation for unyielding persistency, courage, and devotion. While the First and the Second Brigades were the first to enter the fort and contended together without distinction for possession of the parapet, it is not my intention to claim that either brigade was superior. Circumstances to a large degree, no doubt, influenced the selection as to the order in which the troops attacked the fort. My brigade had been near it on the first expedition, had taken its flag and a battalion of prisoners, and all its members believed that it could have been captured then. The knowledge of this fact undoubtedly had much weight in influencing the commanding general to select that brigade to lead the assaulting forces. Each brigade took the position assigned to it, and performed its duties in a most courageous and efficient manner.

The crisis was passed soon after four o'clock, and

success was assured when the First and Second Brigades had mounted the parapet and demonstrated their ability not only to hold their ground but to make steady progress from traverse to traverse. It was a soldiers' fight, and had Ames and Curtis both been killed or disabled at the time Pennypacker was wounded, the battle would have proceeded successfully under the command of field and company officers. When the battle was well begun, skill and generalship consisted in physical blows, and to every one who struck them honor is due.

Admiral Porter wanted success no less than General Terry, and was ready to take any steps in the line of his profession to win it. He knew, as all did, that a naval column would divert the garrison, and asked the Navy to furnish men to form it. In pursuit of victory desperate chances were often taken. Never did men undertake a more difficult or hazardous task, and never did men offer themselves in their country's service with more zeal, courage, or unselfish devotion than did the officers and men of the Navy and the Marines on the beach at Fort Fisher. Their action contributed to the progress of the Army—whether the gain justified the losses we shall never know. The naval column was important as a diversion, but its value was slight in comparison with the fire of the six hundred guns of the ships trained on the fort. The fleet maintained an uninterrupted fire for two days, exceeding in effectiveness any bombardment recorded in the annals of war. To Admiral Porter's fleet the army was indebted for its uncontested landing, its uninterrupted approach to within charging distance of the fort, and the well directed fire in front of the assaulting forces without which success would have been impossible.

It will not be out of place to refer to the enemy and their defence of the fort. The constant fire of the Navy for two days deprived the garrison of opportunity to rest or prepare food. They suffered but little from this bombardment until brought out of their bomb-proofs to contest the advance of the assaulting forces; then they came under

the hottest fire men ever encountered. Colonel Lamb skillfully conducted the defence, aided by General Whiting, who had volunteered his services on entering the fort. They protected their men until the decisive moment and then led them with conspicuous gallantry.

The left of the parapet was in charge of a junior officer whose mistake, that of a moment only, was in failing to mount the parapet and contest our advance from the ditch. The men serving the piece of artillery covering the road west of the parapet were so intent in performing their duty that they were unconscious of our approach until ordered to surrender by men of the 117th New York, who went down from the parapet after capturing the second traverse.

General Bragg, in his report of the capture of the fort, says of our assaulting line: "His army column, preceded by a single regiment, approached along the river and entered the work on that flank almost unopposed." This does a great injustice to the men guarding the left, who made it fatal to approach by the road; and not until their capture, in active defence of the work, was the road made a safer line of approach than over the parapet. The Confederate garrison of Fort Fisher might well resent this aspersion of their most stubborn defence and justly complain of the indifference of General Bragg, who had six thousand men within striking distance of our defensive line—more than twice the number of men holding that line,—in not vigorously attacking it. General Bragg reported to General Lee that "at 4 P.M., when the enemy's infantry advanced to the assault, our troops were making a heavy demonstration against the enemy's rear." Although General Bragg expended a large amount of ammunition in making this so-called "heavy demonstration," General Paine's line was maintained without the loss or injury of a single Union soldier.

I have said that the enemy plainly showed signs of weakening before 5 P.M., and that full possession of the fort only awaited the advance of the Federal troops. This

statement is supported by the report of General Whiting, who says:

"The fall both of the general and the colonel commanding the fort, one about 4 and the other about 4.30 P.M., had a perceptible effect upon the men, and no doubt hastened greatly the result, but we were overpowered, and no skill or gallantry could have saved the place, after he effected a lodgment, except attack in the rear."

"The Abstract from Return of the Expeditionary Forces, Bvet. Maj.-Gen. Alfred H. Terry, U. S. Army, Commanding, for January 10, 1865," states the aggregate of the four brigades engaged in reducing the fort, five days before the assault, to have been two hundred and fifty-seven officers and five thousand one hundred and seventy-two men. Of this number probably thirty-seven hundred took part in the assault, and at 9 o'clock P.M. thirteen hundred men under Abbott and three hundred colored troops entered the fort substantially unopposed, to secure a victory actually won four hours before. There are no records in the War Department giving the number of officers and men in the brigades commanded respectively by Curtis, Pennypacker, and Bell, or the number of men taken into action. It is estimated that the First (Curtis's) Brigade numbered nine hundred officers and men; the Second (Pennypacker's), seventeen hundred officers and men; the Third (Bell's), eleven hundred officers and men; Abbott's brigade, thirteen hundred officers and men.

The return of the casualties indicates the actual resistance met by the several brigades, which I give in the order they respectively entered the fort. Curtis's brigade, two officers and thirty-seven men killed; eighteen officers and one hundred and sixty-six men wounded; five missing: 25.33 per cent. Pennypacker's brigade, six officers and forty-five men killed; six officers and two hundred and eleven men wounded; two missing: 16.47 per cent. Bell's brigade, two officers and fourteen men killed; six officers and ninety-one men wounded; two missing: 10.04 per cent. Abbott's brigade, four men killed; two officers and twenty-one men

wounded; four missing: 2.33 per cent. The missing includes those injured beyond recognition and those buried in the sand by the explosion of a magazine after the capture.

In bestowing honors for the victory at Fort Fisher we should prominently mention the Secretary of the Navy, and the officers and men of the North Atlantic blockading squadron, who for three years had continually urged the sending of an army force to join the navy in an expedition to reduce the defences at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. Nor should we neglect prominently to associate General Grant with its capture. He organized the military force, and in spite of the first failure adhered to his purpose with unyielding persistency until the end was accomplished. The skill and labors of Admiral Porter and General Terry were fully acknowledged by the Administration and Congress, which all serving under them heartily approve.

Whatever may be the opinion of military men, as to the wisdom of employing troops in throwing up breastworks inside the fort, using a greater number of men than were engaged with the enemy in close action on the parapet and the floor of the fort near the parapet—instead of sending them across the floor of the fort to the sea-face, which movement would have ended the contest in half an hour, certain it is all will acknowledge that General Ames, under whose directions these engineering operations were carried on, bore himself with coolness and courage.

The services of the gentleman who went on both expeditions in an advisory capacity, although on the first the most important action—the withdrawal of the troops from the beach—was determined upon without his opinion being asked, were briefly stated by General Terry:

“To Bvt. Brig.-Gen. C. B. Comstock, Aide-de-Camp on the staff of the Lieutenant General, I am under the deepest obligations. At every step of our progress I received from him the most valuable assistance. For the final success of our part of the operations the country is more indebted to him than to me.”

It would be unjust, as it would be ungenerous, to with-


hold from the field and company officers the warmest praise for their watchfulness in detecting every advantage afforded by the enemy and for their irresistible impetuosity and valor, which overcame obstacles as great as human skill and stubborn devotion could create, or to fail gratefully to acknowledge the services of the men in the ranks. Their steadiness, fortitude, and bravery were surpassed by no one exercising command over them. Certainly our great commander did not neglect to commend every member of the military force composing the expedition, irrespective of rank or grade, in one of the most extraordinary documents ever filed with the archives of the War Department, wherein he recommended their commander for a high position in the regular army, based solely on their services, and independent of the promotions given to Terry, Ames, Pennypacker, and Curtis in acknowledgment of their personal services.

CITY POINT, VA., January 17, 1865.

HON. E. M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

As a substantial recognition of the bravery of both officers and men in the capture of Fort Fisher, and the important service thereby rendered to their country, I do most respectfully recommend Bvt. Maj. Alfred H. Terry, U. S. Volunteers, their commanding officer, for appointment as Brigadier General in the Regular Army.

U. S. GRANT,
Lieutenant-General.



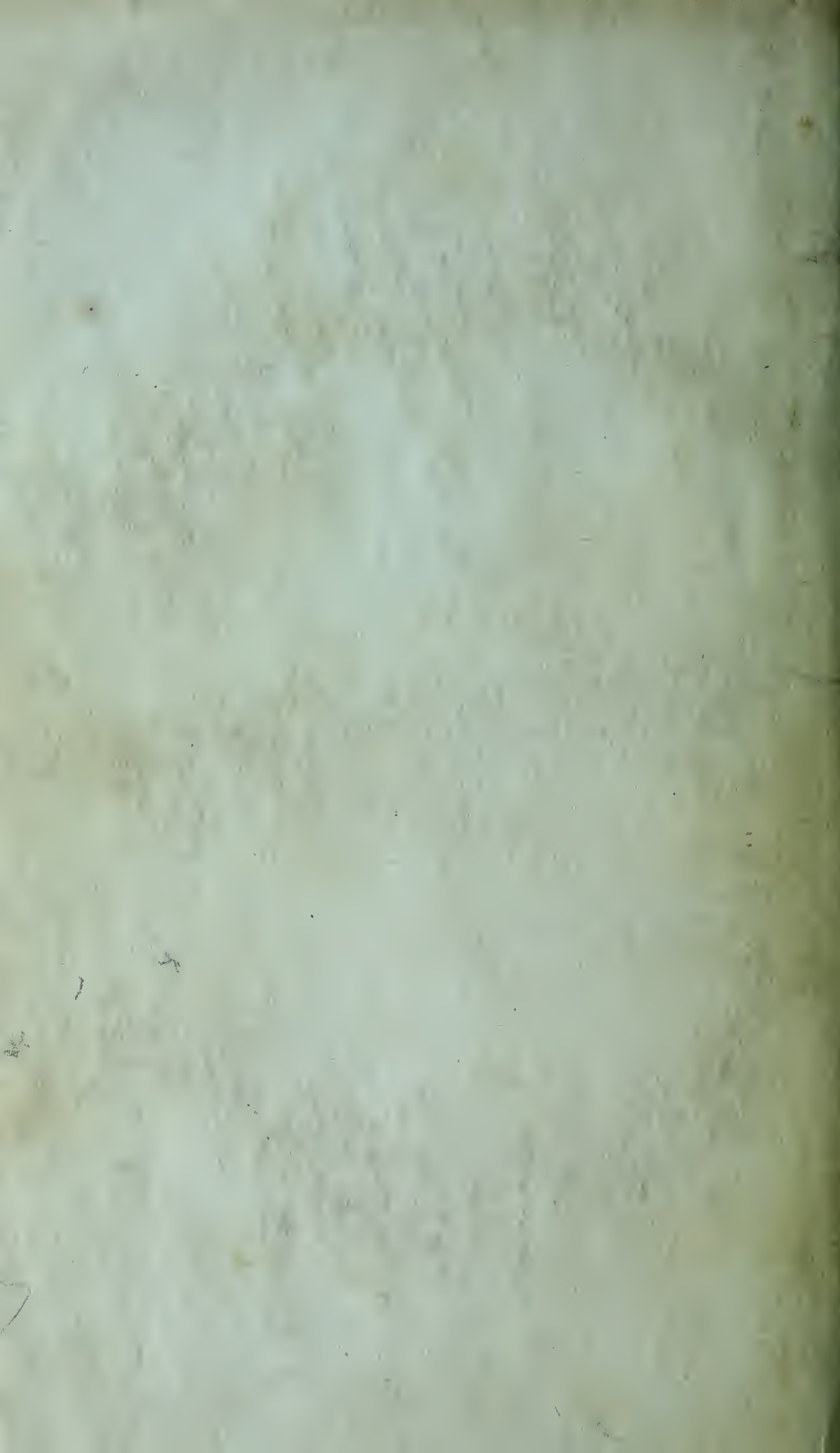
A BOY AT SHILOH.

READ BY CAPTAIN CHARLES MORTON, U. S. ARMY,
OCTOBER 6, 1897.

THE battle of Shiloh was not only the first great battle in the late great war but one of the greatest in our history, and it stands second to none in modern history for its fierceness and persistent determination. It was fought without generals and, it may be said, almost without soldiers. It was armed Americans against Americans, terribly in earnest and full of fight, infuriated by a hatred that had grown out of fifty years of bitter political strife that was to be settled by a physical contest with arms. Both sides believed that upon the turn of this battle, in great measure, hung the general final result. And who, to-day, can doubt that there would have been a more speedy termination of the war, on much different terms, had our army met on this occasion total defeat, or had its victory been promptly and vigorously followed up? Though the passion and hatred that then obtained, gradually, and before the end of the war almost entirely disappeared, the battle has been fought over and over again since, in not always entirely dispassionate and harmless ink. Indeed, it has been written up from so many different standpoints, that it seems there is nothing left untold; and in such masterly ways, that any account by me would prove weak and insipid. Yet there are a few facts relating to the battle, that came under my personal observation or to my knowledge at the time, that have been barely touched upon, or not at all, in any of the numerous descriptions I have read. They seem to me all-important facts for truthful history and a better understanding of the battle.

The proper limits of a paper to be read here preclude the





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